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Ministry of Education

TEACHER DISCIPLINE REGISTRY TO PROTECT B.C. STUDENTS

VICTORIA – Government introduced legislation today to protect B.C. students and provide the public with information about educators who have been disciplined by the B.C. College of Teachers, said Education Minister Shirley Bond.

"Parents and school trustees asked for better access to information about educators who have been disciplined for misconduct, and this government committed to take action," said Bond. "Our students need to be safe in order to learn, and parents need to feel good about sending their children to school."

Under Bill 21, the Teaching Profession (Teacher Registration) Amendment Act, the online registry of the College must include:

- the name of the person who has been disciplined, and the status of the person's certificate.
- a record of any suspensions or cancellations of the person's certificate of qualification or letter of permission to teach
- a record of disciplinary action taken by the B.C. College of Teachers when the discipline relates to physical, sexual or emotional harm to a student, or conduct or competence in breach of College standards.

The reasons for the disciplinary action must also be reported, unless doing so would cause significant hardship to the person who was harmed, abused or exploited. The legislation fulfils election platform and throne speech commitments to establish a teacher discipline registry that the public can access.

"The new discipline registry makes British Columbia a national leader in the protection of students," said Bond. "However, the public still won't know if a teacher has been disciplined in another province. That's why I want to discuss establishing a national discipline registry with my counterparts in the rest of Canada."

The legislation also requires the B.C. College of Teachers to create an employment registry, which will be made available to any school board, authority or band that is considering employing a college member. School boards will be required to provide the college with the names of any college members employed by a board during the previous 12 months.

Bill 21 amends Section 16 of the School Act, which requires a school board to report to the B.C. College of Teachers any time it dismisses or suspends a college member, or if it disciplines a college member for misconduct that involves physical harm, sexual abuse, sexual exploitation or significant emotional harm to a student. The legislation also sets out that the duty to report discipline is imposed on the superintendent of schools.

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"These legislative changes follow through on advice government received from parents, educators, administrators and trustees on how to protect our children and enhance accountability in our education system," said Bond. "We are working to make B.C. the best-educated, most literate place in North America, and we can only do that if our students feel safe."

The Inspector of Independent Schools will also be required to have parallel discipline and teacher employment registries in place. Independent school principals will have a duty to report misconduct of teachers who are certified by the Inspector of Independent Schools.

The B.C. College of Teachers is the professional, self-regulatory body for more than 64,000 licensed educators in British Columbia. Members include teachers, principals and superintendents in the public, independent and First Nations school systems. An educator must hold a certificate of qualification issued by the College to teach in a B.C. public school.

For independent schools, the Inspector of Independent Schools may certify teachers upon recommendation of the Independent School Teacher Certification Committee.

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